

From UCLA Center

About the Personalized learning initiative in New England

We note that twenty New England schools in the *League of Innovative Schools* will be developing “personalized learning experiences” to address the “distinct learning needs, interests and aspirations of individual students.” (See <http://newenglandssc.org/news/view/twenty-new-england-schools-selected-for-personalized-learning-initiative>)

This is another indication that policy makers are embracing the concept of personalized learning. (Note that personalization is emphasized in the common core standards initiative, the proposed model core teaching standards, the 2010 National Education Technology Plan, and Race to the Top guidelines.)

Unfortunately, discussions of personalized learning often leave the impression that the process is mainly about incorporating technological innovations. For the most part, the discussions also fail to place personalized learning within the context of other conditions that must be improved in classrooms and school-wide to address factors interfering with student learning and performance.

Our Center has focused on personalization for decades. Currently, it is a major facet of our *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports*.^{*} We stress that personalization strives to meet learners where they are – *both in terms of current capabilities and motivation*. And while personalized learning provides a sound approach to teaching, classrooms also need to offer special assistance whenever students need something more and schools need to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system to address common barriers to teaching and learning and to re-engage disconnected students

To support professional development, we have developed two continuing education modules and put them online for free and easy access. These are designed to help schools move forward in personalizing learning as an approach that reflects the reality that learning is a nonlinear, dynamic, transactional, and spiraling process, and so is teaching.

- >Module I provides some background, commonly used definitions, and guidance for personalizing learning. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/personalizeI.pdf>
- >Module II highlights barriers to learning and teaching and classroom and school-wide strategies that build on personalization to address such barriers and re-engage disconnected students. <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/persII.pdf>

***See info about the National Initiative at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>**

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development